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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Last week I mentioned that I was heading north to visit my father, who hasn't been feeling too well lately. It was an enjoyable time. My brother and I spent some time with him all weekend - went out to eat a few times, hit his various computer haunts looking for bargains, had a few beers, and just relaxed a bit! It's obvious that he's in a lot of pain due to back problems, but I think we managed to get him out of his other doldrums - at least for now. And I saw the "monster" puppy, who is already a year old now and getting big! I can understand why pit bull terriers get a bad rep, but you wouldn't know it by my father's! A very affectionate and playful dog!

So it was a long week after that! I didn't get much rest over that weekend; the sofa just wasn't as comfortable as I remember it! And after a hectic week at work with a bunch of projects getting closer to finish, I'm beat.

So, unless some earth-shattering news comes by, I think I'll be extremely brief this week and give you all a break!

Until next time...

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CT60 News !!

STATUS : February 11th 2002

The CT60 is running at 66 MHz and the SDRAM controller is running at 66 and 80 MHz (!). The 100 MHz boot is a success but the 060 stops after the white screen (videl initialization). It seems that the caches of the 060 can't run at 100 MHz (internal timing problems)...

It seems too that we have some internal problems at 80 MHz, even with a 60 MHz model... Other tests coming soon...

CT60 at 66 MHz

SDRAM : READ (page Hit) : 133 MB/s - WRITE (page Hit) : 176 MB/s

People who have not yet order or pre-order should now wake up because the production of the CT60 is now being planned for the end of this month ! :-))))

I will produce a quantity = to the number of orders I received (122) + a little (not enough for all late people !).

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Hybrid Arts Source Code Released

Good news!

Calling Programmers!!

Got a BIG package in the mail with LOTS of discs from Tom Bajoras, ex-programmer for Hybrid Arts. He has released all the source code for his programs, and found the discs and sent them to me.

Go here:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/atari-midi-archives/files/SOURCE/HybridArt/

For now, this includes:

CZ Android
DX Android (2 discs)
Ludwig
GenEdit (2 discs)

I still have to zip up about 4 to 5 discs of Easy Score Plus Source Code. This will come later.

Also included in his package are many templates and configurations for GenEdit. I still have to sort and Zip them up. I will post about it when I have completed this part.

I am pretty sure Tom Bajoras used magamax C to compile the source. What we really need is:

1. A unprotected version of DX Android, as we do not have a downloadable version even though Tom Bajoras has released it as freeware.

2. Unprotected Copies of ALL the programs, as the versions we have are all "libed" versions. The MCA dialogs have been removed, but a real version is much more preferable.Tom Bajoras has approved of these as downloads (of course)

3.Better versions of the programs...for example, a new version of Ludwig would be very nice!

I have also uploaded to the web master at Orphaned projects at Atari-source.com. Perhaps we will get some response there as well.

I think it is great that Tom Bajoras has decided to release the source code. It gives us another opportunity to make things even better.If any programmers here can help, please contact me. We especially need #1 on the list above.

Tim Conrardy
tconrardy@hotmail.com

Tims Atari MIDI World
http://tamw.atari-users.net

XTOS Publishes Schematics

Schematics if the XTOS computer have been published.

http://www.xtos.de/

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Boy are you guys lucky! Last night I wrote about three pages for this column about how the human race is becoming dumber and dumber, and how our intelligence is what has made it possible.

Upon re-reading it tonight, I decided to scrap the whole thing. Not because it wasn't true, or because I didn't believe it, but because if you were going to agree with it, you wouldn't need to read it, and if you were going to disagree with it, it wouldn't do any good anyway.

Let's just say that I think that we need to add some chlorine to the gene pool and leave it at that.

Anyway... this is going to be a short column, so let's get to it, shall we?

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
==========

Piotr Mietniowski asks:

"I’m looking for screenblaster (external or internal). Is it still possibility to buy it."

Jo Even Skarstein tells Piotr:

"I don’t know if it’s still available, but instead of buying an internal Screenblaster, you should instead buy a cheap oscillator and use Videlity. The oscillator is just as easy to install, and much, much cheaper. Also, you have a much wider variety of clocks to choose from. Take a look in the hardware-section on http://atari.nvg.org/"

John Garone asks about a using Cubase:

"Anyone know how to maximize the volume of an audio waveform (not the MIDI velocity but the sound on an Audio track) using Cubase 2.06?

P.S. Is 2.06 the latest for Atari?"

Tony Keramidas tells John:

"Yeah CAF 2.06 is the latest version (back in 1996)!
You can use the normalize function in Offline mode but go for a cup of coffee,then...another option is...
...You can use in the audio mixer the AUX controls to maximize the volume but it will not be a part of the final audio file.You must do a "mixdown" but it’s a little complicated..."

John tells Tony:

"To answer my own question (in case someone else needs the info) it looks like the "Normalize" selection is similar to maximize.

For some reason my NG list didn’t group your response but I found out what you stated by experimenting, hence my follow-up to my own question! And thanks for the extra info..."

Chris Thorley asks about using a PC mouse on an ST:

"I have heard its possible, with suitable driver software, to use a PC mouse on an STe. Can anyone tell me if the driver software is still available?"

Hallvard Tangeraas asks for help in locating an old standard:

"I’m trying to find *complete* Xcontrol distributions, but all I find is either re-arranged setups with various parts missing (docs etc.) or just the ACCessory without anything else.

I’m looking for versions 1.0 and 1.31 of the German, UK and USA language versions (yes, there’s a difference between the UK and USA versions in the way dates are shown).

They’re for my TOS 2.06 documentation project as I plan to make related files available as well.

Anyone know where I can download these from? I’ve tried loads of FTP and websites, but was hoping that someone with the original floppies they got with their machines might be able to help.

PS. please don’t send me attachments right away before asking if someone else has beat you to it! I pay for my online time by the minute so I’d rather not have ten copies of the same files. Thanks."

Edward Baiz tells Hallvard:

"I have seen them on various sites, but cannot remember where. I use the accessary COPS which I like better. It works well on my Hades and my STe. You might want to give that a try if you cannot find what you want."

Hallvard tells Edward:

"Yes, I have both Cops and Zcontrol.
The main reason for asking for these complete versions is that I want to make them available to anyone who reads my TOS 2.06 user-guide (still not complete, but getting there=.

I was hoping that someone had gotten their together with their computers (I guess Mega STe and Falcon users must have received them for sure).

I’ve already received version 1.0 of the German version, and probably soon version 1.31 (Germany) as well.

Anyone got 1.0 and 1.31 of the UK and USA versions?"

Phil ’Puffin’ asks about problems he’s having with HD Driver:

"Hi everyone. I’m having a problem with HD Driver 7.55.
I just formatted a new Syquest 270MB cart and I can’t get it to boot with HD Driver. When I first boot up my MegaST4 w/TOS 1.4 and Link 97, it loads from disk first as normal. However, when it starts detecting drives attached, it displays the following:

IDE 0: ~-~~-~[[--]] (other garbage characters)
ACSI 0: Syquest SQ270S

It looks like HD Driver is trying to find an IDE drive and trying to boot from it. However, I have no IDE drive connected. I only have my Syquest 270 is connected. It’s ID0 and has been terminated.

To add to this, I also cannot access drive C:. When I try to install HD Driver on the Syquest, it only lists drive D:. I tried installing HD Driver on drive D and set it to boot from drive D under the General dialog box, but that didn’t work. (I’ve ticked "ICD Compatible Host Adapter" too) Then I tried unselecting all the devices except ACSI 0 in the "Device Assignments" dialog box to no avail.

I even checked "IDE Drives" under Options, and the dialog box lists 2 IDE drives with negative sectors! Somehow the IDE drive checking in this version isn’t working.

The funny thing is that I had this happen before, and I actually fixed it myself, but now I forgot what I did! Can anyone help?"

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, tells Phil:

"This is a strange problem, but you can simply ignore it and disable any IDE devices. Please refer to the manual for details."

Dennis Bishop asks for help with substituting power supplies:

"OK, today a guy here in the trailer park cleaned out his work space, I collected all of the computer junk he had. I tore apart an old (1984) 8088 machine and got a good working power supply out of it, and it has a whole bunch of leans from it. I'll have to get me a multi-meter for sorting out the leads some time next month, now what I need is the order of the leads from the Falcon030 power supply, Mine is packed in a box, but I believe there's at lest 5 wires from it, I need to know their order and what power rating they are supposed to be.

I also got a ST-251-1, and a bunch of small 3.5 hard drives too.

Also, on my 1040ST I've got a useable KX-P1124 printer hooked up, but I don't know what all the function buttons are for or the other controls either. I have a 2nd one of those printers that will be put onto my TT030 so that once I have a keyboard for it I can use it too. But does anyone have a manual for this printer or knows the control keys order?

I've got to monitors I need to test and two tower cases with power supplies too."

Joshua Kaijankoski tells Dennis:

"I can help you on the PSU. Falcon needs +12v +5v and GND. The blue wire on the Falcon is +12v and the black ones are GND and the 2 red ones are +5v. You'll have to check the PC's with a multimeter."

'Sam F' asks about moving his Falcon030 to a new case:

"I have a C-Lab Falcon. What would I need and how difficult would it be, to re-case my unit in a tower case? Also, it has an internal 2.5" scsi drive, and also has what I believe is a bus for an ide drive. So, what do need to do to place an ide drive in place of the scsi drive? Any and all suggestions/ideas will be welcome."

Joshua Kaijankoski tells Sam:

"Here are some helpful links:

http://freespace.virgin.net/asteroid.76/tbird/
http://www.myatari.net/issues/dec2001/casemod.htm "

Ben Gainey asks for Atari info:

"I come from the world of pcs so please forgive me if i make some awful assumptions...

How does the atari boot?

Is its OS code kept all in rom, or does the rom load the os from a floppy?

Linux works on the atari right?

How does linux boot on the atari so that it can take over the machine?

How would I go about making an atari boot my own code from, say, a floppy disk?

The reason I ask is since I am working on a hobby os, mostly for the PC, but I want to make it easily portable, so i intend to also write a basic functionality to boot on different architecture (M68k processor with MMU)."

Laurent Vogel tells Ben:

"Very old versions of the OS were on floppy, with a simple boot loader in ROM. Now the OS is in ROM. However on bootup it
- checks for some hardware cartridge and jump into them at some point
- after reset it checks and in some conditions it jumps to a reset-resident programs
- it loads the floppy bootsector, and if this bootsector is executable, it jumps in
- it then try to execute an executable boot sector found on hard disks.
- finally programs found in the X:\AUTO folder are executed one after another (where X: stands for the letter of the boot drive, either the floppy or a partition in a hard disk)
- at last the desktop appears.

It is said that Linux works on some Atari computers (ones with at least a 68030), but I never checked, as I only have a bare 68000 atari or emulators.

I suppose it (Linux) is run from the auto folder, or perhaps launched by boot loaders that can be installed on the MBR of the first hard disk, (like LILO?)

Simply ensure that the first sector of your floppy has the right checksum. For details, just have a look at the source code for EmuTOS, a re-writing of the Atari ST OS covered in GPL, at

  http://emutos.sf.net

especially the files bios/floppy.c and bios/blkdev.c (for the floppy). As EmuTOS is self-contained, and runs currently on actual and emulated hardware from 68000 to 68040, I think you might find other valuable info there."

Well folks, that’s it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Immersion Sues Microsoft, Sony!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Georgia Goes After Violent Games!
  New James Bond!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Immersion Sues Sony, Microsoft Over Game Consoles

Immersion Corp. , which develops technology that makes joysticks and video game pads vibrate and rumble, on Monday filed suit against Microsoft Corp. and Sony Corp., claiming that elements of their video game consoles violate Immersion's patents.

The company said Sony's use of feedback in controllers for its PlayStation and PlayStation 2 console, and Microsoft's use of the same for its Xbox, violate Immersion's patents on its "haptic feedback" technology.

A Sony spokesman was not immediately available for comment. A spokesman for Microsoft had not seen the suit and could not immediately comment.

The Sony and Microsoft video game consoles all have controllers that rumble and vibrate in conjunction with certain events, like explosions, in some of their video games.

San Jose, California-based Immersion said the suit was filed in federal court for Northern California after negotiations with Sony and Microsoft failed.

According to Immersion's Web site, at least five companies currently license its feedback technology for game controllers.

Separately, the company said it has promoted Vic Viegas, its chief financial officer, to president and chief operating officer.

The company also said its quarterly burn rate had dropped under $500,000.

Besides video and PC gaming, the company also has operations in the automotive and medical industries.

Bond Adventure Has All The Right Ingredients

If the James Bond franchise didn't take itself so seriously, the latest 007 adventure game could have been subtitled ''Send in the Clones."

''James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire" features the British secret service agent in a quest to unravel the mystery behind a biological research firm run by a man with a criminal past. What he eventually uncovers is a plan to clone and replace key world leaders, and it's up to 007 to thwart the plot.

Because ''Agent Under Fire" has all the right ingredients for a Bond adventure -- guns, gadgets and girls -- this first-person shooter should

please most 007 fans.

‘‘Agent Under Fire" has three levels of difficulty and a dozen "missions," a word that’s often misused in computer games where the ‘‘missions" are sequential and no different from chapters in a book.

The tale begins in Hong Kong, where a beautiful CPA operative has been captured by the research firm. Armed with a handgun and some gadgets, your first task as Bond is to invade the laboratory and rescue the agent, who (a.) never seems to find the time to button the top half of her white blouse and (b.) is tied to the mast of a submarine that’s about to submerge.

From there, you have to battle the bad guys in a car careening through Hong Kong; invade the British Embassy in Romania, twice; spy on a Swiss company where you meet the heart-stopping twins, Bebe and Bella; sneak around aboard an aircraft carrier, and fly back to the Swiss Alps for a final rendezvous with the villains.

As in the movies, much of the sex and violence is only suggested, which is why ‘‘Agent Under Fire" carries a teen rating. There’s no blood and the preternaturally-pretty women don’t do much more than dress provocatively.

One nice feature about the game is that it offers several options for defeating the baddies. For example, there are places where you can take out a shooter by squeezing off a round at the rope that holds a dangling crate, or wipe out a half dozen nasties by targeting the propane tank in the forklift just behind them. In some chapters, stealth is more important than marksmanship.

My only real problem with the game was the setup for the controls, which I found confusing and counter-intuitive. I’d frantically try to call up a weapon and, instead, get a useless gadget. Personally, I think it’s more logical to have one thumbstick guiding the direction you’re facing and the other controlling motion. But in this game, each thumbstick does a little of each.

Also, the controls vary a bit from chapter to chapter, depending on whether your main task is to shoot or drive. Then there are the stupid little things that plague too many of these games, like the bodies that vanish into the ether after you kill them, and the sniper who has his sights trained on the CIA agent even though it’s obvious she’s not going anywhere because she’s tied to the sinking sub.

‘‘Agent Under Fire" also has a multiplayer option that works well and can accommodate up to 4 players with a multitap. One fun feature is the ‘‘low gravity" option, which lets you hop around the terrain as if you were on the moon. Unfortunately, it’s not true ‘‘low gravity." If it were, the recoil of the guns would send you flying. That would really be interesting.

Electronic Arts is releasing ‘‘Agent Under Fire" for the GameCube in mid-March.

Georgia Targets Violent Video Games

State lawmakers this week introduced a bill that would make it a crime in

Georgia to provide games that depict graphic violence to minors.

The bill, dubbed the "Violent Video Game Protection Act," would make it a criminal misdemeanor if a person "sells, rents, or otherwise provides for use for a charge" any video games to those under the age of 18 that depict "decapitation, bloodshedding, dismemberment, and grotesque cruelty."

The bill's authors said improvements in technology and increasing access to such games necessitate stricter regulation.

"Video games are available to children not only at traditional places of business specializing in amusement but also through a variety of retail outlets and magazine sales for home use and by communication on the Internet," the bill reads. "Improvements to the picture, speed, and resolution of the new age of video games have made the depiction of characters, places, and events contained in the games amazingly realistic."

State and local governments are increasingly trying to regulate access to violent video games.

In January, the City Council of Garden Grove in Southern California imposed restrictions on cybercafes, hoping to stop virtual brutality from exploding into real-life violence because of charged emotions of the children playing video games. Other California cities have enacted similar or more stringent restrictions.

The proposed bill in Georgia would use the Entertainment Software Rating Board's independent ratings system. The rating's body was established in 1994 by the Interactive Digital Software Associations.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

FTC's Working For a Spam Clampdown

The Federal Trade Commission is training its legal guns on spam.

On Tuesday, the agency plans to unveil an aggressive three-point program to crack down on unwanted commercial e-mail.

The agency receives about 10,000 e-mails a day in a database it set up for consumers to forward their unsolicited mail. Since the database was launched in 1998, it has amassed 8 million pieces of purported spam, according to an FTC spokeswoman.

The spokeswoman would not comment on the specifics of the plan, but she did say it would involve "taking legal action" against those sending spam.

FTC attorneys also have investigated the problem, replicating a scenario

nearly every e-mail user has experienced. In one case, an FTC attorney set up six new e-mail accounts and within days had received dozens of unwanted e-mails.

Crackdowns on spam have been largely unsuccessful, partly because they pit concerns about privacy against free-speech issues. In addition, although many states have adopted anti-spam measures, spammers have argued that there is usually no way for them to know an e-mail recipient lives in a certain state where some types of junk e-mail are illegal.

Some anti-spam advocates have urged angry junk e-mail recipients to turn to small-claims court. Last year, Ellen Spertus of California won a $50 judgment against Kozmo.com; the now-defunct online delivery service sent her spam even though she had asked to be removed from its contact list.

Feds Launch ’Spam’ E-Mail Crackdown

Federal regulators kicked off a crackdown on the junk e-mail known as "spam" on Tuesday with an announcement that they had settled charges against seven people accused of running an e-mail pyramid scheme.

The Federal Trade Commission said that the seven defendants had participated in a chain-letter scam that promised returns of up to $46,000 for a $5 payment. Such chain letters are illegal in the United States.

The chain letter eventually drew in more than 2,000 participants from nearly 60 countries, the FTC said.

While the consumer-protection agency has targeted some 200 Internet-based scams over the past several years, it has not until now gone after spam. That’s changed, said FTC Chairman Timothy Muris.

"We’re going after deceptive spam and the people who send it. We want it off the Net," Muris said at a press conference.

The agency will not seek to limit the flood of pornography, fake diploma offers and get-rich-quick schemes that clog Internet users’ inboxes, FTC officials said.

Rather, FTC agents will concentrate on spam that violates existing laws prohibiting false or deceptive trade practices.

In addition to chain letters, pyramid schemes and other scams, the agency will target spammers who use deceptive return addresses or do not respond to consumer requests to be taken off their contact lists, officials said.

The agency plans to settle several more cases within six months, said Eileen Harrington, assistant director of marketing practices.

Internet users received an average of 571 pieces of unsolicited commercial e-mail in 2001, a number expected to rise to nearly 1,500 by 2006, according to Jupiter Media Metrix.

Attempts in Congress to pass an anti-spam law have stumbled over opposition from direct marketers who say their activities would be unfairly limited.

Nineteen states have passed anti-spam laws, but they have by and large failed to turn back the tide of spam, said David Sorkin, a professor at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

Most state laws have little teeth, and few states devote the resources to enforcing them thoroughly, Sorkin said. Consumers who sue spammers in small-claims court often have trouble tracking them down or collecting damages, he said.

"I think it’s probably just a drop in the bucket," Sorkin said.

Spammers are not likely to face jail time or large fines from FTC actions. In deceptive-trade cases, the agency can usually only force companies to give back profits and pursue "structural" remedies that modify future behavior.

The seven spammers, who had been sent letters of warning by the FTC in September 2000, agreed to refrain from participating in deceptive schemes in the future, or lying about the legality or potential earnings from any such schemes.

In addition, the defendants must return any money they take in from the chain letter in the future, cannot share their lists of recruits, and must submit to FTC oversight of their actions.

Some 2,000 other participants in the chain letter received a warning letter from the consumer-protection agency.

While the FTC is preparing a national "do not call" list for telemarketers, a "do not spam" list would probably not be effective, Harrington said.

Harrington said Web users should forward spam to the FTC for analysis, using the e-mail address http://www.uce@ftc.gov. The agency has amassed a database of 8.5 million spam messages, and takes in an additional 10,000 per day, she said.

E-Mail Chain Letters Illegal

More than 2,000 people involved in an Internet chain letter that promises "$46,000 or more in the next 90 days" are receiving government warnings that the scheme is illegal, the Federal Trade Commission said Tuesday.

"This is the kind of activity that somebody’s grandmother could be engaging in without fully appreciating that it’s illegal," said Eileen Harrington, a director with the FTC’s division of marketing practices. "The vast majority of participants will lose money."

The warnings say the FTC has already sued people for being involved with the chain e-mail. Recipients of the warning are told that, to avoid a similar fate, they should stop promoting the chain and return any money they have received.

The scheme promises extravagant amounts of money in exchange for consumers sending $5 in cash to each of four or five people on a list. Recruits add their own names to the top of the list before sending it on.

The chain e-mails even suggest that skeptical recipients contact

Harrington’s office at the FTC to confirm that the scheme is legal.

FTC Chairman Timothy J. Muris said the warnings are part of a larger campaign against junk e-mail that he announced in October.

"We’re going after deceptive spam and the people who send it," Muris said. "We want it off the Net."

In September 2000, the FTC sent a first round of warning letters to 1,000 people involved with the chain e-mails. The agency received responses from many people who confessed, apologized or said they did not know the letters were illegal.

But a follow-up probe, including a sting operation in which investigators posed as chain letter participants, found others who kept sending the chain e-mails despite the warning.

The FTC said it sued and settled charges against seven of the worst offenders who sent out mass mailings. The seven people could face fines or imprisonment if they are ever again involved in deceptive marketing schemes, Harrington said.

The identities of those involved with the chain e-mail were culled from a government database that each day collects about 15,000 unsolicited junk e-mails passed along by consumers. The FTC said it has collected more than 8 million spam messages since 1998.

E-mail scams often involve business opportunities that turn out to be illegal pyramid schemes; work-at-home jobs, such as envelope stuffing and craft assembly; and bogus weight-loss products that promise to melt away fat cells.

Harrington said more lawsuits against deceptive spammers will be coming soon, including possible actions against those who break promises to remove consumers from junk e-mail lists.

Addressing e-mail con artists, Harrington added, "Be warned that if you are using e-mail to perpetrate a deception, the Federal Trade Commission is watching and we may come after you."

Congress Considers Cybercrime Bill

A House bill that could give life imprisonment to some computer hackers received support from administration officials and technology executives Tuesday.

Microsoft lawyer Susan Kelley Koeppen, a former Justice Department prosecutor, said courts should take hackers more seriously.

"Cybercrime will never be effectively curbed if society continues to treat it merely as pranksterism," she said.

The government is increasingly concerned about the well-being of government and business computer systems in the face of teen hackers and foreign threats.

"As we increase individuals’ physical safety at our airports, borders and

even sporting events, we should not forget to strengthen cybersecurity as well," said Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, the bill's sponsor.

The bill would give judges greater flexibility in imposing sentences for computer crimes. Current law ties the severity of the crime to the cost of damage done and limits jail terms to 10 years.

Smith's legislation would require judges to take other factors into account, including the sophistication of the offense, intent and violations of the victim's privacy.

If the criminal "knowingly causes or attempts to cause death or serious bodily injury," the judge could impose up to a life sentence.

The Justice Department, Microsoft and Internet service providers supported the change in testimony to the House Judiciary subcommittee on crime.

John G. Malcolm, of Justice's criminal division, described a hypothetical situation in which a hacker shut down a town's phone service, including emergency 911 calls.

"It is easy to envision in such a situation that somebody might die or suffer serious injury as a result of this conduct," Malcolm said. "Although the hacker might not have known that his conduct would cause death or serious bodily injury, such reckless conduct would seem to merit punishment greater than the 10 years permitted by the current statute."

Microsoft's Koeppen suggested that convicted hackers have their computer gear confiscated by the authorities, a practice similar to that used in drug cases.

Another portion of the bill would protect Internet providers from lawsuits if, believing someone is in danger, they give records of communications to a government entity.

Koeppen said she believes the term "government entity" could be applied to firefighters or even school principals.

"We believe that such emergency situations will be rare, but that law enforcement personnel may not always be reachable or even the best prepared to take action," she said.

Privacy advocates said the language is too broad and would encourage Internet providers to hand over information too often.

"At the same time that they're expanding the number of people that can get this information, they're bringing down the standard in which they can get it," said Ari Schwartz of the Center for Democracy and Technology.

Schwartz dismissed the idea mentioned by several supporters that the information sharing would be useful to combat terrorism. Some of the suspected terrorists in the Sept. 11 attacks communicated over the Internet.

It's not as though law enforcement agencies knew about that information and wanted to get it, Schwartz said. "It was not the standards that failed us, it was the intelligence-gathering that failed us."

EU to Endorse New Law for Digital Sales Tax

European Union ministers will on Tuesday back a law obliging non-EU suppliers to impose a higher tax on digital sales to European consumers, removing a competitive handicap for EU companies, the EU Commission said.

The planned law applies to online sales of software and computer games as well as some radio and television services.

The law, which has prompted the United States to accuse the EU of unilaterally trying to impose its own standards, helps close a loophole which allowed Europeans to avoid paying value added tax (VAT) on products and services bought from non-EU sites.

So far, governments around the world have been slow to tax business done over the Internet in an effort to promote a potentially lucrative new market arena for retailers and software developers. But this protective stance is being eroded as politicians seek to redress this imbalance.

The European Commission, which drafted the law, said new rules were needed to eliminate competitive distortions and that they would affect only a small share of total sales.

"The new rules will affect less than 10 percent of sales from non-EU suppliers," European Commission spokesman Jonathan Todd told a press briefing on Monday.

European business had mixed reactions to the directive. Software vendors expressed concerns that it could add layers of cost to digital transactions, a rapidly growing business segment, particularly for firms that sell computer security software and software upgrades to handheld devices.

But British Internet service provider Freeserve, a unit of French-owned Wanadoo , welcomed the directive, saying it would foster fair competition in Europe.

"We are pleased to see it because it will create a more level playing field between EU ISPs and non-EU ISPs," said David Melville, company secretary and general counsel for Freeserve.

For the past six months, Freeserve has been lobbying the UK government to impose VAT on its largest UK competitor AOL Time Warner. Melville estimated that AOL saves 30 million pounds ($42.74 million) per year because of its VAT exemption.

The new law will not affect digital sales to business customers, which account for around 90 percent of total sales, the EU’s executive said.

EU finance ministers will rubber stamp the new law at a meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, which is due to focus on the sensitive issue of a potentia budget warning to Germany.

The ministers’ green light will pave the way for the law to come into effect once the Parliament has been consulted.

The ministers will also adopt a proposal to raise the taxation of cigarettes and fine-cut tobacco to reduce existing gaps in EU excise rates.

Under the new law, non-EU suppliers of digitally delivered goods and services will have to register with a VAT authority of an EU state of their choice and levy VAT at the rate applicable in the state of residence of the customer.

This could mean levying an additional charge of up to 15-25 percent for products sold to EU customers.

The country of registration would then reallocate the VAT revenue to the country of residence of the customer.

Kenneth Dam, United States Deputy Treasury Secretary said in a statement on Friday the Bush administration had serious concerns about the EU's tax plans.

"Unilateral proposals such as the EU's may encourage others to take unilateral measures, rather than waiting for the global consensus that can be developed through a more deliberative and inclusive process," Dam said in a statement.

He criticized Brussels for moving ahead with the proposal while work on taxation of e-commerce was still underway in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The Information Technology Association of America, representing 500 IT firms, said the rules were putting a heavy administrative burden on U.S. companies and risked flattening U.S. online sales to the EU.

"There is the risk that the EU may prescribe rules of compliance that, in effect, will close the European market to U.S. and other non-EU businesses for certain transactions," ITAA said in statement late in January.

States Ask Judge to Bar New Microsoft Witnesses

The nine state attorneys general still pressing an antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. told a federal judge on Monday she should bar more than a dozen last-minute witnesses Microsoft plans to call to argue against more severe sanctions against the company.

Attorneys for California, Connecticut, Massachusetts and six other states told U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly that Microsoft had used a "hide-the-ball" tactic by naming 23 new witnesses in the case on Friday, only hours before the deadline.

The states accused Microsoft of trying to delay the proceedings and argued that the judge should not allow Microsoft to present 16 of the witnesses because the company had shown a "blatant disregard for this court's schedule and for the reasonable and appropriate conduct of litigation." "By adding 23 previously undisclosed witnesses to its final witness list (at the last minute), Microsoft is obviously trying yet again to derail this remedy proceeding to the detriment of consumers and competitors who continue to be harmed by Microsoft's monopolistic conduct," the states said in their motion filed on Monday.

Microsoft said the company needed many witnesses because the states have proposed drastic sanctions, including forcing the company to sell a stripped-down version of its Windows operating system.

"It is important that the court hear from consumer and industry witnesses on the harms they would suffer under the state proposals. The non-settling states are seeking remedies that go far beyond the appeals court rulings and they don’t want the court to hear about the negative impact their proposals will have on consumers, on the industry and on the economy," the company said in a statement.

The list includes witnesses from computer manufacturer Compaq, chip maker Advanced Micro Devices Inc. and retailer Best Buy Inc., as well as executives from the telecommunications and cable television industries.

"With a decision this important, the judge needs to hear from the entire industry not just (Microsoft’s competitors)," said Jonathan Zuck, head of a pro-Microsoft trade group called the Association for Competitive Technology.

An appeals court in June dismissed parts of the landmark case against Microsoft, but upheld the original trial court’s ruling that the company violated antitrust law by illegally maintaining its monopoly in personal computer operating systems.

The Justice Department and nine states in the case have signed on to a settlement that would, among other things, give computer makers more freedom to feature rival software.

But the nine other states have refused to sign on to the settlement and are pressing for more severe remedies in court.

In addition to the hearings on sanctions, Kollar-Kotelly must also decide in separate proceedings whether the Justice Department settlement is in the public interest. Legal analysts have said that the company could strengthen its case if the judge endorses the settlement before remedy hearings begin.

Kollar-Kotelly has scheduled hearings on whether to endorse the settlement for the week of March 4. Hearings on sanctions are slated to start on March 11.

States Request Microsoft Windows Code

The state attorneys general still pursuing the antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. have asked a federal judge to force the company to show them the inner workings of the Windows operating system.

In a bid to pry open one of the world’s most valuable pieces of intellectual property, the states argued they need to see the Windows source code in order to verify Microsoft’s claim that it is not technically feasible for the company to offer a stripped-down version of the operating system.

"Microsoft cannot base its defense on the design of its source code and simultaneously deny the litigating states the opportunity to test those arguments by interrogating the code," the states said in their filing.

The motion was filed with U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly on Tuesday and made available on Wednesday.

As part of their proposed sanctions against Microsoft, the states have told Kollar-Kotelly that she should order the company to offer a stripped-down version of Windows, without any additional features such as its Internet Explorer browser.

In demanding to see the Windows source code, the states said the legal questions in the case "cannot be fairly resolved when the very subject matter in dispute is hidden from all but Microsoft’s own employees."

Andrew Gavil, a professor of antitrust law at Howard University, said Microsoft could have a hard time refuting that argument.

"This is the equivalent of demanding of Coke that they turn over the formula," Gavil said. "This is exactly what Microsoft wanted to avoid."

In Tuesday’s motion, the states also asked the judge to appoint a technical expert to help provide "impartial opinions on the complex, highly technical issues raised by the parties."

Microsoft has rejected both requests when approached directly by the states.

Microsoft spokesman Jim Desler said the company had proved during the trial that it is impossible to remove software features from Windows without damaging the operating system.

"They’re trying to relitigate issues that they did not prevail upon in the court of appeals," Desler said. "And, in doing so, they’re trying to complicate this case unnecessarily."

Desler said state attorneys general are working "hand-in-hand" with Microsoft competitors, who "will stop at nothing to get access to our intellectual property."

Microsoft reached a deal with Justice in November to settle the long-running case. Nine of the 18 states in the lawsuit agreed to sign on to the deal, but nine others are pressing ahead and asking the judge to impose stricter sanctions.

During the trial, the government accused Microsoft of using its Windows monopoly to snuff out competitors who make add-on "middleware" products, such as Netscape Communications Corp.’s Navigator browser.

In a landmark ruling on the case in June, a federal appeals court dismissed parts of the government’s case, but upheld a lower court’s conclusion that Microsoft had used illegal tactics to maintain the Windows monopoly.

Among the illegal tactics cited by the court was the "commingling" of Windows source code with add-on middleware.

The dissenting states -- including California, Massachusetts, and Connecticut -- say the availability of a stripped-down browser, without additional features, would help restore competition to the software business.

Later in the day, lawyers for the two sides said in a joint legal filing that they cannot agree on how much time each should have to bring witnesses before the judge.

The dissenting states want each side to be limited to 20 witnesses and no more than 85 hours of testimony. They said that would amount to about three weeks of courtroom time.

Microsoft proposed that each side be allowed up to 150 hours worth of testimony, nearly double the states' proposal.

The states have in the past accused Microsoft of using legal maneuvers to drag out the proceedings and delay the outcome of the case.

But Desler said Microsoft is not stalling.

"We'd like nothing better than a short process. However, given the breadth of the states proposals, and their potential harm on industry and consumers our recommendations on time and witnesses are entirely appropriate."

Yahoo's HotJobs Purchase a Done Deal

Yahoo! announced it has acquired more than 98 percent of all outstanding shares of HotJobs stock and will move quickly to fold the job board into its network of sites.

When a tender offer expired at midnight Friday, Yahoo! had acquired 32.9 million shares of HotJobs stock, with another 5.4 million pledged to be sold, according to the company. Taken together, that is 98.6 percent of all outstanding stock in New York-based HotJobs.

The deal closed less than two months after Yahoo! surprised many observers by making an unsolicited US$436 million offer for HotJobs, which at the time was awaiting clearance from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to move forward with a planned merger with Monster.com parent company TMP Worldwide.

But that deal had been bogged down for six months in the governmental review process -- a process that Yahoo! said in its offer letter it could shorten considerably. Despite Monster's claims that the Yahoo! deal had negative tax implications, HotJobs said just after Christmas that it would accept the portal's offer.

Yahoo! delivered on its promise of a fast closing in late January, when the DOJ granted the merger a shortened waiting period.

By acquiring HotJobs through a tender offer, Yahoo! did not have to put the deal to a shareholder vote, which also helped shorten the process.

According to analysts, Yahoo! now must figure out how best to leverage HotJobs' and its own strengths to compete in a hotly contested market space.

Morningstar.com analyst George Nichols told the E-Commerce Times that while HotJobs will reduce Yahoo's reliance on ad revenue, questions remain about the price the portal paid.

"I think this will virtually ensure [Yahoo!] will meet its stated goal of reducing ad exposure from roughly 76 percent of sales in 2001 to 50 to 60 percent by 2004," Nichols said.

Still, he added, "It may take a while for the acquisition to earn a good return on the purchase price. After all, Yahoo! paid a sizable 60 percent premium to HotJobs' market value."

A larger question, however, may be whether Yahoo's purchase can turn it into a market leader in the online jobs space, Nichols said. While Yahoo! has been actively diversifying and exploring new markets, many of the company's moves have made it a player but not a leader.

"For example, its purchase of Launch.com still does not make it a market leader in music services. And its forays in auctions and personals have met with limited success relative to EBay and Match.com," Nichols said. "Even with the latest acquisition, it will trail far behind market leader Monster.com, and Careerbuilder ... will not be too far behind."

That feeling seems to be shared by other analysts as well.

"I see a number of positives," Derek Brown, an analyst with W.R. Hambrecht & Co., said in a report. In addition to providing non-advertising revenue for Yahoo!, HotJobs will give its acquirer access to nearly 8,000 corporate customers, which then will become potential clients for the portal's growing menu of enterprise services.

Brown added, however, that he maintains a neutral rating on Yahoo! because its valuation remains high relative to earnings.

Forrester Research analyst Charlene Li, meanwhile, said the deal has the power to "supercharge the online recruitment business."

"While still well behind Monster.com, Yahoo! can leverage its strong user relationships and HotJobs' recruiter sales force to quickly close the gap," Li said.

Yahoo! said it will move quickly to merge HotJobs into its subsidiary, HJ Acquisition Corp.

Holders of outstanding HotJobs shares will be eligible to convert them into a fraction of a Yahoo! share plus $5.25 in cash, according to the company.

PayPal Reschedules IPO

Derailed from its original schedule because of a patent lawsuit, PayPal's initial public offering is now back on track.

The company, which allows consumers to make and accept online payments, is now expected to price its shares Thursday and begin trading Friday, according to a representative from Salomon Smith Barney, the lead underwriter of the offering.

A PayPal representative declined to comment.

Wall Street has been anticipating PayPal's IPO because it will be one of the first by an Internet company since the economic downturn. Internet companies and investors have been awaiting a rebound of the IPO market.

Online security firm CertCo sued PayPal last week, and PayPal responded to the suit Monday, charging CertCo with deliberately attempting to delay its IPO.

CertCo representatives did not return calls seeking comment.

PayPal moved to get its IPO back on track Thursday, filing documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission addressing the CertCo suit and another potential patent dispute by Tumbleweed Communications.

PayPal has not changed the terms of the offering, according to the Salomon Smith Barney representative and a regulatory document filed Monday. The online payments company still plans to sell 5.4 million shares for between $12 and $14 a share.

Although the company offers a popular service among online auction users, with some 8.5 million personal accounts, PayPal has never posted a profit. In its most recent quarter, PayPal lost $18.54 million on $40.4 million in revenue.

PayPal IPO Could Be Delayed Further

Troubled online payment service PayPal Inc. warned Thursday that a company suing for patent infringement will seek a court order to shut it down; a threat that could further delay its much-anticipated initial public offering of stock.

Palo Alto-based PayPal said Thursday in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing that CertCo Inc. intends to seek a preliminary injunction to block the widely used e-mail service for making e-commerce payments. PayPal had 12.8 million accountholders as of Dec. 31.

If New York-based CertCo files for an injunction, PayPal has vowed to fight the request. In its defense, PayPal said it will point out that CertCo obtained its patent two years ago without raising an objection to the payment service, which launched with 24 users in October 1999.

PayPal has denied it is violating the patent and filed a counterclaim alleging CertCo’s suit is designed to disrupt its IPO, widely viewed as a litmus test of the stock market’s interest in unprofitable Internet companies.

The CertCo suit, filed in Delaware on Feb. 4, forced PayPal to postpone its plans to sell 5.4 million shares of stock last week.

PayPal still hoped to set its IPO price at $12 to $14 per share Thursday evening, but industry analysts predicted CertCo’s injunction plans will force the company to table the offering again.

"When everyone in the market is focused on being cautious, why would anyone want to take a risk on PayPal until the company cleans up the litigation risks?" asked Kyle Huske of IPO.com.

Besides the CertCo suit, PayPal is wrangling with banking regulators nationwide over whether its payment service should be licensed. Regulators in both Louisiana and New York have concluded PayPal is operating an unlicensed banking business.

Louisiana has ordered PayPal to stop providing its service there until the licensing issue is resolved.

California regulators forced PayPal to stop transferring money abroad until the company receives a state license a process expected to take at least four months, the company said.

The uncertainties raised by the possible CertCo injunction and the regulatory haggling prompted IPO analyst David Menlow to downgrade PayPal's IPO to "risky" Thursday. Before the recent problems arose, Menlow had rated PayPal as the first quarter's most promising IPO.

The timing of CertCo's legal maneuvers has raised questions about its motives, given the company is asserting its rights under a patent issued two years ago.

"It's clear CertCo doesn't want PayPal to go public in any shape or form," Huske said.

CertCo officials didn't return calls Thursday.

The company has ties to the banking industry; a sector that stands to suffer if PayPal's online payment service continues gaining popularity. Executives from Bank One and Deutsche Bank sit on CertCo's board, according to the company's Web site.

PayPal Makes Strong Market Debut

Online payment company PayPal got off to a wild start on its first day as a public company, rising as much as 53 percent Friday.

The 5.4 million share offering opened at $15.41, more than 18 percent above the $13 price set by underwriters Thursday night. The stock had risen as high as $19.99 in early morning trading.

PayPal had been scheduled to go public earlier this month, but was forced to delay the offering after it was hit by a lawsuit over patents.

PayPal's service allows consumers to make payments to one another over the Internet. A payer deposits money in a PayPal account using a credit card, bank account or existing PayPal account. PayPal can then cut the recipient a check for the amount or transfer the money to another bank account. The recipient can also leave the money in the PayPal account, where it earns interest.

The service is extremely popular for person-to-person transactions such as auctions, and eBay customers make up the bulk of PayPal's users. According to the company's prospectus, 63 percent of dollar volume for transactions in the first nine months of 2001 came from settling auction purchases, particularly on eBay.

Although PayPal is popular, it isn't yet profitable. In the quarter ended Dec. 31, PayPal lost $18.54 million on sales of $40.4 million, compared with year-ago losses of $41.9 million on revenue of $8.8 million.

While the opening price may seem like an incredible boom, the stock could

have gone even higher had it not been for the bad news that emerged in the past week, according to David Menlow, president of IPOfinancial.com.

"We could have seen this opening with a double-digit premium," he said.

PayPal tried to dismiss concerns about the lawsuit last week, saying it was a deliberate attempt to disrupt its initial public offering. The suit, filed by privately held online security company CertCo, alleges that PayPal's technology violates a CertCo patent.

PayPal said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission that CertCo's patent was issued two years ago, and PayPal started offering its service for more than two years ago.

But the lawsuit wasn't the only troubling sign for investors. PayPal also disclosed in SEC filings that Louisiana had asked the company to stop offering its service to state residents until it gets a license to do business there. PayPal said it has a license to transmit money only in Oregon and West Virginia and is applying for similar licenses in 14 other states, including its home state of California.

Menlow said the disclosures could cause some investors to be cautious on the stock.

"I was a fan and I still believe all problems listed in the prospectus were being addressed or will be addressed by company," he said. "But until such time as there is clearer resolution to these issues to where they no longer look as explosive or detrimental, the stock could be a train wreck waiting to happen."

Microsoft Security Patch Said Ineffective

A Microsoft Corp. program designed to plug a common security hole is vulnerable to the very attack it was designed to prevent, the Wall Street Journal alleged in a report on Thursday, citing a prominent security consulting firm.

Last month Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates announced a company-wide initiative to improve the security features of its products.

Microsoft on Wednesday unveiled a collection of programming tools, including a new version of a special-purpose program that it modified to try to prevent a common hacker attack called buffer overflows, the Journal said.

Researchers at Cigital, of Dulles, Va., found that Microsoft apparently adopted a technique that has been used with the Linux operating system and shown to be vulnerable to attack, the Journal said.

As a result, the program, called Visual C++.NET, could lead programmers to write even more programs that are vulnerable to buffer-overflow attacks, the Journal alleged.

Microsoft was not immediately available to comment.

End of a Free Era For Web Surfing Site

Netsurfer Digest, a site that’s been pointing Web browsers to notable sites since before the Internet was big business, has started charging an annual subscription fee.

Netsurfer Communications began the free newsletter in 1994, the year before Netscape Communications held its initial public offering and helped ignite the Internet wildfire that burned out in 2000. Plunging ad rates and intrusive ad methods are now forcing the company to revise is financial strategy.

In a note to subscribers Sunday, Netsurfer Digest said it has started charging $20 a year for its three weekly lists of links: Netsurfer Digest, Netsurfer Science and Netsurfer Education. The move marks the end of a more sharing era for the modest site, which strove to give readers a guide to the Web with "more signal, less noise."

Ad rates have plunged for Internet sites, the company said. Netsurfer Communications received only $200 a month for its ads, about a million of which it delivered each month.

The subscription plan is typical of Web sites’ efforts to cope with a dismal Internet ad market. Yahoo, long dependent on ads, has been trying to emphasize premium services, while advertisers have been moving to more aggressive ad formats.

But Netsurfer Communications, mirroring the decision of search site Google, wanted no part of these new in-your-face ads.

"Online ad technology had become so annoying that we no longer wished to be associated with this industry," the company said on its site. "Having seen the direction in which all these new ad-delivery technologies are heading, it is painfully obvious that the ultimate destination is that special circle of hell which has heretofore been reserved exclusively for dinnertime telemarketers."

Klez Worm Reborn As Nastier Version

A new variant of the destructive Klez worm has had moderate success, prompting one antivirus company this past weekend to release free tools to deal with its spread.

The variant, carried by e-mail and known as Klez.e, overwrites victims’ files with random content on the sixth day of odd-numbered months. It can spread automatically on Windows systems that use an unpatched version of Microsoft’s Internet Explorer.

"The latest version, Klez.e, (poses) the most serious threat to computer safety," said Moscow-based antivirus company Kaspersky Labs.

Though antivirus companies discovered the Klez.e variant in late January, its tenacity has prompted Kaspersky Labs to release an antivirus tool to remove it.

Based on how many instances of each worm and virus the company has

intercepted in the past 24 hours, U.K.-headquartered mail service provider MessageLabs ranks Klez.e fourth on its top 10 list, behind Sircam, BadTrans and Magistr--old worms that continue to plague the Internet. However, the company has intercepted fewer than 400 copies of Klez.e.

In the same 24 hours, BadTrans popped up about 750 times, and Sircam made about 1,600 appearances.

Klez.e arrives in an e-mail message with a subject heading generated from a list of more than 20 keywords or forged to look like the heading on an undelivered message. The body of the message is empty or has random text.

"That's the way it runs automatically, but it still could come onto your system," said Vincent Weafer, senior director of antivirus firm Symantec's security response team. In that instance, a dialog box would appear, asking computer users if they want to run a program called Klez.e. Users should, of course, click no.

Microsoft patched the IE hole last March, so any Windows system that has been recently updated should be immune to the worm's auto-infecting function. Weafer said Klez is in the top 10 but has caused only one-eighth as many reports as BadTrans.

The worm infects Windows archive files with a copy of itself. It also attempts to circumvent antivirus programs and defeat some competing worms by shutting them down if they're found running.

"It tends to attack the user-interface component, but in most cases the real-time scanner is still active," Weafer said. Antivirus software consists of two basic components: the real-time scanner, which catches viruses that attempt to run, and an application with an interface that allows PC users to scan their machine for infections.

Hence, Klez.e "becomes a pain more than a real threat," Weafer said. Symantec has updated virus definitions that are available to protect against the worm.

Microsoft Windows users should run Windows Update to ensure they are protected against the auto-executing features of this worm.

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